

Consultation on Proposed Changes to Provision at Selworthy Special School (URN: 146698) in Taunton
Monday 20th October 2025

1. Background

In September 2025, The Oak Partnership Trust launched a consultation proposing an increase to capacity of Selworthy Special School as part of the school rebuilding programme. The proposed increase would provide 24 new school places for local children, with the first places likely becoming available in September 2028.

2. How could members of the public find out about the statutory consultation?

There were a number of ways in which members of the public and local organisations were alerted to the consultation:

- Notice was placed on the school's website
- Notice was placed on the Trust website
- Taunton Parish Council were informed
- Email alerts were sent out across all Trust school communities
- Notice was placed on all Trust school Facebook pages

3. Who could respond to the consultation?

Any member of the public was welcome to submit their comments about the proposals.

This could include:

- Neighbours (local residents and businesses)
- Pupils, staff and parents & carers
- Prospective parents
- The local district council
- The local MP and local councillors
- Other schools
- Trade unions

4. Could people object to the proposals?

Yes, anyone was able to object or comment on the proposals.

5. How could people find out additional information before providing feedback?

Members of the public were able to contact the Trust if they required any additional information before submitting feedback. If parents and carers of a pupil on roll had any specific queries or requests for additional information, they were able to contact the school.

6. How could people have their say?

Members of the public could submit views by:

- Submitting their views online at The Oak Partnership Trust consultation portal [here](#)
- Emailing office@oak.education
- Writing to:

Mr I Robinson
The Oak Partnership Trust
Central Operations Office
Selworthy Special School
Hazelbrook Campus
Lyngford Road
Taunton
Somerset
TA2 8HD

7. How long did the consultation run?

The consultation period ran from Friday 26th September 2025 until Friday 17th October 2025 (a total of three weeks).

8. What was the deadline for submitting views?

The deadline was 5.00pm on Friday 17th October 2025.

9. How many responses were received?

There were **61** responses to the consultation, of which 58 were from individuals and 3 were on behalf of organisations. **50** responses (81%) said they were in support of the proposal. **5** responses (5%) said they were not in support of the proposal.

10. Comments

A number of people provided their written views.

Statements in Support of the Proposal

1. Increased Capacity is Needed

- Many respondents expressed strong support for increasing places, citing a **desperate need for more specialist school spaces** in Somerset.

2. Positive Impact on Families

- Keeping siblings together in one school would benefit families.
- Expansion would help children who currently attend schools far from home due to lack of space.

3. Community Services

- Suggestions included opening facilities like **sports areas, therapy hubs, sensory rooms, and holiday clubs** to the community.
- Ideas for **enterprise opportunities** like a café or shop run by learners were also proposed.

4. Support for Vision and Values

- A majority agreed that the school's vision and values meet community needs.

5. Support for Funding Agreement Change

- Over half of respondents supported changing the Funding Agreement to enable expansion.

Statements Opposed to the Proposal

1. Staffing Concerns

- Repeated concerns about **staff shortages**, class closures, and **high staff turnover**.
- Worries that expansion without addressing staffing would worsen existing problems.

2. Quality of Provision

- Some felt the school is **not currently operating effectively**, and expansion could compromise quality.
- Comments highlighted **care issues**, such as incidents of restraint and inadequate supervision.

3. Post-16 Provision Gaps

- Expansion may increase pressure on **sixth form places**, which are already limited.

- Concerns about learners being left without appropriate post-16 options.

4. Loss of Community Feel

- A few parents worried that a larger school could lose its **personal, family-like atmosphere**, which benefits their children.

5. Lack of Transparency and Planning

- Some felt **insufficient information** was provided about the vision and funding implications.
- Calls for a **clear, staged plan** to avoid repeating past mistakes in rapid expansion.

11. Decision

Having considered the comments received, I am satisfied the proposal should proceed to the next stage. The matter will now be considered by the Regional Director for the South West.

Mr I Robinson

The Oak Partnership Trust

Report date: Monday 20th October 2025